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EIN VOLKSFEIND. Schauspiel in fünf Akten von Henrik Ibsen.

Edited with Introduction and Notes, by J. Lassen Boysen,
Ph. D. Oxford German Series, 1917. Pp. CX+193. Price 90
Cents.

This edition of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* in German translation is a unique and splendid innovation. It can hardly be denied that Henrik Ibsen was the world's foremost dramatist and one of the most original literary figures in the 19th century; certain it is at least that his influence in the world of letters has been so paramount that no student of literature can afford to neglect a closer study of this great literary genius. Only a small percentage of American students, however, is able to reach the author in the original Norwegian, and therefore Dr. Boysen's edition of this work in German translation has rendered one of Ibsen's masterpieces of dramatic exposition available to the majority of our American students.

The work is prepared primarily for students of the German language and literature and this attitude is consistently preserved with scholarly clarity thruout the *Introduction* and *Notes*. The edition, therefore, properly constitutes a supplement to the many literary monuments of the German language which have appeared in the *Oxford German Series*, and thus adds to our college editions one more treasure of Germanic culture.

Of all European countries Germany perhaps has been the most profoundly affected by Ibsen's genius, at least so far as his social propaganda and his dramatic art are concerned. Certainly, without a preliminary study of Henrik Ibsen no student can have an adequate comprehension of those forces which culminated in the *Realistic* or *Naturalistic Movement* of the 19th century in Germany. Therefore, in presenting Ibsen in German translation and with the German viewpoint constantly in mind Dr. Boysen has added materially to our available funds for instruction in German literature. Since Ibsen belongs to the world, his influence upon German thought and literature is rightly viewed as a special subject in German studies. But aside from this, the editor has also rendered a service to Norwegian literature by his sympathetic presentation which both enhances the intrinsic value of the play and increases our appreciation of the author's world-wide influence.

From the purely American viewpoint, on the other hand, Dr. Boysen has shown excellent judgment in the selection of his text. As noted in the *Preface* (p. VI), *An Enemy of the People* is one of Ibsen's social dramas most closely connected with the very life of the American commonwealth. Every true American, who has the ideal of democracy at heart, cannot fail to appreciate that Ibsen's scathing denunciation of the 'compact majority' applies with equally peculiar fitness to much that is in the spirit

of American public life. Whatever arguments Ibsen in this play may have advanced against democracy, it is nevertheless true that the fundamental principle of true democracy is *individual morality*, which is the key-note of the play and the essence of Ibsen's whole philosophy of life. *An Enemy of the People*, therefore, naturally lends itself to a more sympathetic understanding on the part of the American student than do many other of Ibsen's social dramas in which the more subtle questions of psychology tend to compromise the moral issue.

Dr. Boysen divides his *Introduction* into three chapters—I. *Ibsen's Life and Works*, II. *Ibsen and Germany*, III. *Genesis of An Enemy of the People*. Then follow a *Bibliography*, the *Text*, *General Note on Some Modal Adverbs*, and the *Notes*.

Introduction

The *Introduction* is on the whole a clear and succinct presentation of the subject matter. The editor has here united a fine scholarly sense with a sound pedagogical attitude consonant with the purpose of his work. He has nowhere burdened his students with unnecessary details or extended his work into an elaborate commentary for teachers (which is unfortunately the case with many of our college editions), yet at the same time the scholarly presentation of his subject must certainly be of great assistance to every teacher.

The *Introduction* is not intended for a comprehensive study of the author, but in certain instances (both in the *Introduction* and the *Notes*) the editor has made more or less serious omissions which impair the general value of his work. One is at a loss to know whether Dr. Boysen unintentionally omitted certain references to literary facts and parallel situations or whether he considered them as non-essential for a clear conception of Ibsen's literary development. Not all of the omissions noted in the following review are, to be sure, necessary to this end, yet the reviewer feels if they had been included (in an abbreviated form or by a brief marginal note) in the *Introduction*, that they would have furthered the editor's purpose without extending his work beyond its proper limits.

Dr. Boysen naturally lays his chief emphasis on Chapters II and III, which on the whole seem to be better done than Chapter I. Yet even here there is little to which serious objection can be made.

I. Ibsen's Life and Works

In emphasizing Ibsen's German ancestry (p. X) no mention is made of the fact that according to the most recent investigations (cf. especially Joh. K. Bergwitz, *Henrik Ibsen i sin avstamning Norsk eller Fremmed?* Kra. 1916) the percentage of German blood in the Ibsen pedigree was much smaller than has hitherto been supposed.

The humiliating experience of bankruptcy in the poet's early youth not only served him with "the psychological model for the crises in the lives of Dr. Stockmann, Nora, and others" (p. XIII), but is also reflected with poetic splendor in *Peer Gynt* (cf. especially Act. I, Sc. 1).

The editor's statement (p. XV) that Ibsen's poetic effusions in his Grimstad days, "written as they were in the dead of night, lack the bright and joyous note of youth," is open to misinterpretation. These poems lack "the bright and joyous note of youth" not *because* "they were written in the dead of night," but because this note was an inherent part of Ibsen's nature, enhanced in his youth by his peculiarly unfortunate circumstances and ill-suited environment. In fact, Ibsen never did enjoy a natural youth or participate fully in its pleasures.

In connection with Ibsen's sojourn of 1852 in Denmark and Germany, the editor calls attention to the fact (p. XVII) that Ibsen profited by the reading of Hettner's *Das Moderne Drama*. But since this chapter is devoted to Ibsen's literary career without special reference to Germany, the student should also be informed that Ibsen on this journey gained a first hand acquaintance with the French dramatist Eugène Scribe (*La Bataille des Dames*), whom he saw performed at Copenhagen. As poet-manager of the National Theater in Bergen, it was Ibsen's avowed purpose on this journey to study dramatic art with special reference to its technical phases. That Scribe more than any other dramatist influenced Ibsen's dramatic technique is beyond peradventure. His adoption of the 'analytic' method for the tragedy was no doubt largely original, but the influence of Scribe in this regard is too important a literary fact to omit.

Furthermore, since Ibsen's plays serve as a model of dramatic technique and may be studied with profit from this viewpoint alone, it is to be regretted that Dr. Boysen has not devoted more attention to this practical phase of Ibsen study. Even a short chapter upon this subject would not in the reviewer's opinion have extended the *Introduction* beyond proper limits.

In connection with Ibsen's journey of 1862 and 1863 in Western Norway (p. XIX), no mention is made of the fact that on this journey Ibsen received many impressions of mountain scenery and of Norwegian peasant life, which later received literary expression in his *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*.

On page XXVII f. Dr. Boysen discusses Ibsen's doctrine of parental responsibility, yet in the analysis of *Little Eyolf* (p. XXXVI) no attention whatsoever is paid to this doctrine, notwithstanding the fact that upon this doctrine the essential problem of the play is based. In fact, nowhere has the poet pronounced such a severe judgment upon the lack of parental responsibility as in *Little Eyolf*. It is here too that he put into a concrete formula

that principle of life according to which the individual of future generations must develop—*Forvandlingens Lov* (Act II, III).

Nor has Dr. Boysen in this connection mentioned Ibsen's speech of Sept. 24, 1887 (at Stockholm) in which the poet formulated essentially the same law as applied to organized society—*Idealernes Forplantningsevne og deres Udviklingsdygtighed*. This doctrine, furthermore, reflects the poet's ideal of "das dritte Reich" (p. XXIV) and is extremely important with reference to the nature of Ibsen's pessimism, which in his Stockholm speech receives a clear and emphatic interpretation. A reference to this speech, therefore, deserves especial recognition in this chapter of the *Introduction*.

II. Ibsen and Germany

This chapter is a most interesting and skilful presentation of Ibsen's relation to German letters and deserves an emphatic word of praise. The editor has given a clear outline of the history of the German drama in the 19th century with special reference to those forces which laid the seed for the introduction of Ibsen into Germany. Dr. Boysen has with fine judgment pointed out the distinction between Ibsen's dramatic art and the method of the "Naturalists" who followed the Norwegian dramatist more or less under a misapprehension of his aim. It is refreshing also to note that justice is accorded the work of Ludwig Passarge, the only German of repute to render Ibsen's poetry into his native tongue (notably *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*).

It detracts in no wise from Ibsen's merit as a dramatist to accord him full justice as a poet. Too little emphasis in general has been laid (especially by German commentators) upon Ibsen the poet; which has resulted in giving the student who does not read Norwegian, a somewhat one-sided view of the author's contribution to literature. The average student, for instance, does not know the poet Ibsen but only Ibsen the dramatist and social reformer and therefore naturally labors under somewhat the same misguided apprehension of the poet's aim as did the German School of 'Naturalists.' The study of such works as, for instance, *Brand* or *Peer Gynt* is often undertaken with the exclusive intention of deriving therefrom some philosophical dogma and therefore without due regard for the intrinsic value of Ibsen's poetry, much of which must necessarily be lost in translation. The editor has not laid sufficient emphasis upon this factor which is so important for the student to understand, if he is to have a correct estimate of Ibsen's literary activity. A poet is something even more than a dramatist or a torch-bearer of civilization; he belongs to the peculiarly aesthetic and emotional realm of art.

For a more comprehensive and just estimate of Ibsen's contribution to literature the editor, in *likening* Ibsen to Lessing "in the common struggle for truth and freedom" (p. LXVII), might

also have *differentiated* these two authors; for Ibsen was also that which Lessing was *not*, viz., one of the greatest poets of his race and time.

In characterizing Dr. Stockmann as "typically German" (p. LVII), the editor should have made it clear that Dr. Stockmann's character is German only insofar as it is Germanic. The spirit of defiant individual self-reliance is peculiarly Scandinavian, of which the sagas are full to overflowing and which still lives in Modern Scandinavian literature in as much of its pristine vigor as ever can be found in the revolutionary literature of Modern Germany. A statement to this effect might have avoided giving the impression that Ibsen on account of his long sojourn in Germany and contact with German culture had been germanized to such a degree that he produced a specifically German type of character in Dr. Stockmann.

In connection with Ibsen's host of followers in Germany (p. LXXV) it might have stimulated the student's interest if the editor had mentioned a few concrete examples of Ibsen's influence upon Germany's best known authors of this period; cf. e.g. *Rosmersholm* and Hauptmann's *Einsame Menschen*, *Peer Gynt* and Hauptmann's *Die Versunkene Glocke*, or *The Lady from The Sea* and Sudermann's *Das Glück im Winkel*.

III. Genesis of "An Enemy of the People"

This chapter is all the more worthy a contribution since Ibsen has left no outline nor jottings of any sort to throw light upon the composition of his drama. The relation of Ibsen's inner experiences and of his private and public life to their expression in literature is clearly brought out and in some instances with refreshing originality (cf. e.g. the author's views as to educational reform in Norway (p. LXXXVI f.) with Dr. Stockmann's refusal to send his children to the public schools).

Since this work is edited primarily for students of German literature, attention should have been called in connection with Dr. Stockmann's doctrine of individual self-reliance (pp. LXXVIII ff.) to almost the identical expression of the same doctrine in Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell*—"Der Starke ist am mächtigsten allein" (I. 437).

In connection with the "double aspect" in Ibsen's majority argument (p. LXXXIII), two important facts should be noted.

First, Ibsen's plays often supplement one another by presenting essentially the same problem from a different viewpoint (e.g. *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts*, *Ghosts* and *The Wild Duck*, etc.). The dramatic conflict is almost always heightened by the fact that in carrying out his ideal to a logical conclusion the hero inevitably becomes involved in an ethical dilemma,

which makes it necessary to restate the problem from a new viewpoint; hence the 'double aspect' presented in a sort of supplementary form in a new play.

Secondly, Ibsen in his dramas never loses that sense of proportion necessary to distinguish between a purely theoretical idea and its practical application to existing social conditions. However emphatic his position as a social reformer or as an idealist, he is above all a *poet*, who sees life as it is. Consequently, even tho his heroes be presented in the light of poetic abstractions or as an embodiment of a lofty ideal, they are after all human creations endowed with human limitations. Dr. Stockmann and Gregers Werle, for instance, have a lamentable lack of perspective necessary for the success of their ideal; a little common sense might have saved the situation. Indeed, Ibsen sometimes seems to give the other side of the question an undue advantage; which results in a sort of 'double aspect' in his own argument. But it must be remembered that Ibsen's strict sense of justice and his inherent disposition to ridicule human frailty often led him to satirize even those who uphold the banner of his own ideal; we feel this to be true to a certain degree even of Brand. The figure of Dr. Stockmann with his childish credulity, his lack of self-restraint and insight into human nature is, like that of Gregers Werle, a conspicuous example of Ibsen's attitude towards the representative of his own ideal. Even tho Dr. Stockmann is not identical with Ibsen, there may nevertheless have been a tinge of self-reproach in the poet's sarcastic references to this character "as more of a muddle-head than himself," etc. (p. C), for who may venture to say that Ibsen at this time did not feel to a certain degree at least that like Gregers Werle and Dr. Stockmann he too had bungled his life's work (cf. Christen Collin "Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*," *Samtiden*, pp. 593-613, 1913).

On page XCI, in connection with the *swamp* motif the editor calls attention to that fact that Konsul Bernick in *The Pillars of Society* speaks about "draining" the moral soil of his native town; but it is perhaps even more significant that Lona Hessel (Act. II) uses the same word (*swamp*, Norw. *myr*) as symbolical of that 'Illusion der Wirklichkeit' which in *An Enemy of the People* is the ulterior significance of the polluted swamp:

Lona Hessel. Men al denne herlighed, og du selv med, står som på en gynnende myr.

Bibliography

No mention is made of American literary journals, such as *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* or *The Publications of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study*. This is to be regretted inasmuch as these journals are in English and contain many valuable and suggestive articles on Ibsen.

Translation

Dr. Boysen has preserved with a few minor corrections the text of the standard German translation (*Volksausgabe*). A few additional suggestions as to translation may not, however, be out of place.

Act I (p. 21)

Petra. Ja, meinen Sie nicht, wir trügen sehr vieles vor, woran wir selbst nicht glauben?

Dr. Boysen evidently endorses this translation, as is shown by his note:

21-26. *trügen* . . . *vor*. "The implication is that they do."

The original reads:

Petra. Ja, tror De ikke, vi *må* foredrage mangt og meget, som vi ikke selv tror på?

There is no reason why *må foredrage* should not be rendered by *müssen* . . . *vortragen*, exactly as in Petra's statement directly above—"og i skolen *må* vi *stå* og *lyve* for børnene," which is translated by—"und in der Schule *müssen* wir den Kindern *vorlügen*." Petra's question is in repetition of her previous affirmation.

Act II (p. 59)

Petra. Bravo. Vater! Er unterwirft sich nicht.

The original reads:

Petra. Far er bra, han! Han gir sig ikke.

From the German translation one infers that Petra addresses the word *Bravo* to her father, whereas both statements are made in the third person as a sort of impersonal eulogy on her father, who in common with her represents the ideal of truth and devotion to a great cause. The shifting of vocative to third person spoils this effect.

Notes

As introductory to his *Notes*, Dr. Boysen has added (pp. 149-159) a *General Note on Some Modal Adverbs*. Aside from the purely pedagogical value of this little chapter no better method could have been chosen for increasing the student's appreciation of those delicate shades of meaning (often lost in translation) which are so essential to the poet's thought.

The *Notes* are prepared with thoroughness and care, the counter-references to the play are well chosen and a practical attitude towards the acquisition of the German language consistently preserved. A study of the *Notes* should enable any student to gain a thorough knowledge of the play. In fact, the editor is scrupulously careful that no important detail in Ibsen's dramatic art be left unnoticed (cf. e. g. the reference to the scene directions 5-*12).

Almost no typographical errors have been noted and only in one instance does the editor's language seem to lack clarity; in fact, his faults are rather those of omission than of commission.

For a more comprehensive study of the play the reviewer has suggested in the following criticism a number of references (omitted by the editor) to parallel passages and situations in others of Ibsen's plays but most especially in *The Pillars of Society*, which is so intimately connected in thought with *An Enemy of the People*.

15.—14-15. *Besonders uns . . . die. . .* "By the use of the redundant "die" the preceding noun or phrase is itself left without grammatical function in the sentence." This is not true, since *uns* (*Besonders uns vom "Volksboten," die konnte er nicht verdauen*) is in the same construction as the demonstrative pronoun *die*, i.e. the object of the infinitive *verdauen*. In the examples given to illustrate this type of colloquial speech the editor has confused the *elliptical* with the *appositional* (redundant) construction; e.g. 15, 25 f. *Und dann der verdammte dünne Tee, den er fortwährend in sich giesst* and 20, 12 *das Arbeiten, das ist eine Strafe für unsere Sünden*. In the first case *der Tee* is the subject of some verb understood, *Und dann (kommt noch dazu) der verdammte dünne Tee, den er . . . giesst*, whereas in the second case *das Arbeiten* is in the same construction as the (redundant) demonstrative pronoun *das*, i.e. subject of the verb *ist*.

Billing's favorite oath "Gott verdamme mich" (15-9 etc.) labels this character, just as Hilmar Tønnesen's "uf" characterizes that pharisaical cynic. Hilmar Tønnesen's constant reference to himself as the standard-bearer of the ideal is, furthermore, similar to Aslaksen's ostentatious pride as a paragon of continence and moderation (39-9 f. etc.).

The proposed torchlight procession (27-27) in honor of "the first man of the town" plays a most conspicuous rôle in Karsten Bernick's career and no doubt represents one of the many impressions in *An Enemy of the People* which Ibsen carried over from *The Pillars of Society*.

In connection with Morten Kiil, the 'Badger' (30-*11), the editor should have called attention to Ibsen's proclivity to make use of appropriate nicknames (cf. e.g. *Rummel*=the *Noisy* in *The Pillars of Society*, *Falk*=*Falcon*, *Styver*=*Farthing*, *Stråmand*=*Strawman*, etc. in *The Comedy of Love*). In fact, the name *Stockmann* itself may possibly contain an implication as to Dr. Stockmann's natural stubbornness: 'den der holder sig stiv som en stok' (cf. Ibsen's *Efterladte Skrifter*, Introduction, XXXIII, f.).

Hovstad's reference (41-19) to "airing out" (*auszulüften*) the diseased atmosphere of the community is exactly the same metaphor as Lona Hessel (Act I) uses with reference to the social atmosphere of "the morally depraved": "jeg vil lufte ud, Herr Pastor."

The personal vanity which Dr. Stockmann expresses, upon receiving the support of the public press and of the most influential members of society (43-20 f.), reminds one of this particular weakness in Ibsen himself, who was easily flattered by the attention of princes and men of rank; he never refused a decoration. Dr.

Stockmann here certainly reflects one side at least of Ibsen's *ego*, which the poet does not hesitate to put into a very conspicuous light.

Dr. Stockmann's realization of the whole truth (100-10), which is suddenly revealed to him in the short experience of a few days, is parallel to that sudden awakening which Karsten Bernick experiences after the interviews with Lona Hessel (Act V).

54-9. "Note that Petra will not let her mother offer any excuses, but frankly admits that she has been listening to them." The pronoun "them" does not, of course, refer to the "excuses" but to *Dr. Stockmann and his brother*, who are engaged in a heated conversation.

60- **Hovstad* . . . *schreibend* should read **Hovstad* . . . *schreibt*. The reference here to 214, 26 f. is a misprint (perhaps meant for 81, 8 f.?).

The assumption on the part of these self-satisfied philistines that the drunken man must be a foreigner (i.e. not 'one of them,' "er ist kein *Hiesiger*," 103-17) is in accord with that narrow spirit of provincialism expressed with such masterful irony in *The Pillars of Society*, cf. e.g. Karsten Bernick (Act I): "Å hvad; med udlændinger må vi ikke tage det så strængt."

The note to *die Vornehmen* (108-28) might well have been supplemented by a reference to Stengard's views upon "aristocracy," as expressed in his conversation with Dr. Fjeldbo (*The League of Youth*, Act II).

The contemptuous view which Dr. Stockmann holds towards the *vulgus profanum* ("der Haufe," "die Masse," "der Pöbel," etc., 108-18, 109-23, 24, 25 etc.) is expressed in almost identical terms (Norw. *mobben og massen*) by Professor Rubeck in *When We Dead Awake* (Act I). Furthermore, the craven cowardice of the 'mob,' which paralyses every courageous impulse and prevents any decisive action,— "Und doch haben sie da draussen gestanden und krakehlt und geschworen, sie würden mir den Garaus machen; aber handeln—handeln—, nein, so etwas gibt es hier so gut wie gar nicht!" (125-26 ff.), is an exact counterpart of the "Gyntish self," which, as represented in the individual Peer, symbolized 'the compact majority' in Norway. Like the howling mob in front of Dr. Stockmann's home, Peer despite his boastful pretensions never dared to take the decisive step:

Ja, tænke det; ønske det; *ville* det med;—
men *gøre* det! Nej; det skønner jeg ikke!

Like Dr. Stockmann, Johan Tønnesen in *The Pillars of Society* suddenly reverses his decision to leave town and resolves to fight the battle out to the bitter end. The real 'enemies of society' are the liars and the hypocrites who must be met and crushed *upon their native soil*.

Thru this edition of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* in German translation Dr. Boysen has undoubtedly contributed much towards

a better understanding of one of the world's greatest dramatists. It is to be hoped that the *Oxford German Series* will continue to edit German translations of Scandinavia's representative authors. Too little work of this nature has been done either in German or English translation. Consequently, those American students who do not read Scandinavian generally lack a just appreciation as to the intrinsic value of Scandinavian literature. To enhance this appreciation a scholarly and sympathetic presentation of Scandinavia's representative authors is necessary; and certainly those of us who represent the cause of Scandinavian culture in America should feel this contribution of Dr. Boysen as a challenge to continue the work so well begun.

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THE SUPERNATURAL IN MODERN ENGLISH FICTION,
by Dorothy Scarborough. G. P. Putnam's Sons. New York
and London, 1917. 12mo., pp. vi+329.

The supernatural in literature has found another advocate in the person of Dr. Dorothy Scarborough, who in her volume *The Supernatural in Modern English Fiction* aims to show the vitality and validity of the supernatural in fiction as in literature in general. As Dr. Charles Edward Whitmore, in his recent book *The Supernatural in Tragedy*, sees in the supernatural the prime essential of tragedy, Dr. Scarborough stresses the persistence and permanence of the supernatural in fiction as well as in poetry and drama.

The supernatural in English fiction reaches back to the so-called Gothic days in the latter half of the eighteenth century, but did not assume its present proportions until toward the close of the nineteenth century. The abundance of ghost-stuff, which we find in the English novels and short-stories of to-day, has followed and is closely bound up with the revival of superstition, which has not failed to come as the predestined swing of the pendulum.¹ The novel and story writers of to-day, in their mad race for plots that will thrill and thrall, have not been slow to grasp upon the resuscitated beliefs of past mythologies, and bring back for our amusement in maturity the spectral fears of the nursery. The supernatural in English fiction is primarily a purveyor of "the creeps." Its function as a medium for social satire, the most striking recent instance of which is Mark Twain's *The Mysterious Stranger*, is but of secondary importance. Hence the ascendancy in English fiction of the ghost over the devil in contrast to other literatures where

¹ The supernatural in modern Celtic literature has its source, moreover, in a love for national antiquity.